

kind and degree, not the less marked, or powerful for good: "the race is not always to the swift, or the battle to the strong."

### ARCHITECTURE TO HIS SON.

#### THE LAMP OF BUILDING.

Is this lamp among the seven is one comparatively vulgar and common-place, it is nevertheless essentially respectable and important. Let me commence to speak of this as I commenced to speak of science: the architect is, after a manner, the ARTIST-BUILDER, I will say, and his art therefore demands a certain knowledge of the ordinary craftwork, as a basis of necessity,—but this is not the point; and further, the architect, as a man of business, is a professor of mechanical skill, and such skill requires, as a preliminary skill, the knowledge of the builder's work,—but neither is this the point at present: but the architect of everyday life has a third part of his subject besides these two, and one of no less prominence in his daily duty, in the practical direction and supervision of the very details of the tradesman's operations,—and this is our question of building.

Now, in fact, among these three matters of business, the last and vulgar one may positively demand to be held the chief. Building may claim the architect as its own man in the first place, whatever else may have a claim afterwards. The genius of the great utilitarian invests him with the trowel to lay bricks and the fork to mix mortar,—the hawk, float, brush, and pail,—the slater's sax, hammer, and nailbag,—the mallet and tool of the mason,—the axe, adze, saw, and sledge hammer,—the plane, chisel, centrebit, gimlet, and glue-pot,—the grooving-iron and ladle,—the heavy pincers of the smith,—the diamond, square, and putty-knife,—the paint-pot, and hog's bristle brush,—with these, I say, does the spirit of everyday doings invest the man who writes *Architect* upon his door-plate; and installing him in the perpetual midst of lime, sand, and buckets of water,—piles of stocks and malms,—drain-pipes and tiles,—bundles of lath, coarse stuff, fine stuff, and stucco,—ochre and white-wash,—ladies, countesses, duchesses, queens, and rags,—York, Bath, Portland, and Caen,—timber and deals,—cast-lead, milled lead, and solder,—pig-iron and malleable,—crown, sheet, plate, and putty,—pigments and oils,—installing him as *chef de cuisine*, lord of all this kitchenery, administrator of all this raw material, it assigns to him the undistinguished but useful task to make for it houses of these—dwellings for it to live and eat and sleep and see its friends in, warehouses for it to stow its goods, and shops to sell them in and count the gain, churches and prisons, schools and penitentiaries, for its good and evil, bridges for it to cross the river, and sewers under its streets to carry off its dirty water. This is the primary mission of the architect,—all else comes afterwards.

In this useful and responsible, but somewhat weary and dirty capacity, you can earn, my son, five per centum on the amount of outlay; and this is cheerfully paid, I believe, in every instance of the pure application of the principle above. The builder makes one 5 per cent. for profit, and another 5 per cent. for what may be called the use of his capital, generally a third 5 per cent. for himself to boot, frequently a fourth 5 per cent. for what may be called even money, and sometimes a fifth 5 per cent. for the credit of the concern, perhaps. The surveyor takes 5 per cent., if he be a person of tact, for making bills of quantities, incidents included. The auctioneer makes 5 per cent. by selling the property. The house-agent makes 5 per cent. by collecting the rents. And for making the plan and specification after an approved model, and supervising the building, the man above spoken of makes also 5 per cent.; to be sure, if he adds to building science and art—knits the skeleton together in enduring balance, and clothes it in immortal grace—a deduction may be made on account of this, because he who banquets on nectar needs not to batten on bread and cheese; but I think you will find it generally admitted that any old country car-

penter and cartwright, who has emerged from that caterpillar condition into the perfect and full blown insect a "sirrowyer," may reasonably claim as his fee for the application of his building experience to any matter in hand, the cheerful payment of 5 per cent. All this may be matter of reflection for you when you think of it; but mark just now the satisfaction with which the vulgar world will readily pay the unpretending surveyor of building work the full remuneration, while the "architects' charges" of men of scientific and artistic skill combined with the other are almost universally begrudged as exorbitant. There is a reason for this: when no pretension is made beyond mere practical superintendence the vulgar can understand the value of the service; but when other matters of higher order and more ethereal nature are superadded, the first matter is overlooked and the vulgar conclude that they are paying for fanciful things which they do not want. Draw therefore this conclusion—that for practical use, nothing will be found more profitable to the everyday architect than a thorough knowledge of the universal work of building,—no lamp of the seven more serviceable than this most dingily burning and unpoetical of all.

I have said that in this question of mere building we have the primary mission of the architect as a man of business. I say so seriously, and without paradox; and in the horny-handed and beer-drinking "sirrowyer" of the provinces I behold the original and archetype and first edition of the professional architect—Charles Barry, as it were, in a wild state. Indeed, my dictionary, being the nineteenth edition of the work of John Walker, gives no other signification of the word *architect* but "a professor of the art of building,—a builder,—the contriver of anything," (this last being, of course, but figurative), while the lately published "Dictionary of Terms" of Mr. Weale's rudimentary series gives me "*architect*, a person skilled in the art of building,—one who forms plans and designs for edifices, conducts the work, and directs the secondary artificers (?) employed,—and whose emoluments are generally 5 per cent. on the amount of money expended." Both these definitions are disgraceful to the book-making of the nineteenth century, but they afford a happy illustration of the circumstance of how much even now the business of the professional architect retains that primary character which is evidenced in the derivation of the name *Archi-tectus*—the chief of the workmen.

For when a man of the world determines to have a house built, as the days are gone by when he would have to set to work to erect it with his own hands, the idea of a builder comes into his mind in the first place. But as civilization is too far advanced now-a-days to admit of such a work being done, except under a specific contract as to price, in the second place there arises the idea of the need for a supervisor to check the builder's honesty; while, in the third place, when we become too discreet to trust to the builder's capacity, there arises the idea of the need for a preliminary contriver to design the plan and conduct the work. And thus we have the original, uncultivated, or wild architect. There is no dreaming of such a thing as art all this time; perhaps the work is a factory or a warehouse: there is scarcely such a thing as science involved; certainly no further than the small empiricism of the workman's skill. The architect was once at the bench himself; the fact is his chief stock in trade, and our man of the world satisfies himself of this before he entrusts him with the outlay of his money, and agrees to his commission of 5 per cent.; indeed, both parties are cordially at one on these grand data,—first, that science is but pedantic affectation, and rule of thumb the practice, one grain of which is worth a ton of the theory of the other; and, secondly, that art is simply hallucination, whether as a matter of fact or a matter of business.

It is only after this that the higher qualities of the architect come into requisition, and at first but faintly, and in the midst of suspicion as to their genuineness. It is a little science

and a little ornament which happen first to be demanded, and this increases little by little, till at length the architect steps forth from the old primary principle so far, and, in the division of labour, becomes so far separated from it, that the builder and the wild "sirrowyer" declare open war against him as a know-nothing, who has never been at the bench. He becomes what is now understood as a "professional man;" indeed, presently his profession becomes one of the "polite," almost one of the "learned;" he becomes a man of higher social class, and scientific calculation and æsthetic study go hard to drive the master-ship of the workmen out of the field. And if they should do so, the more the pity, as concerns the architect as a man of business.

Whether the principle of the division of labour, which has inundated our registry nowadays with trades, professions, and other callings by the hundred, of which our grandfathers could not have conceived the possibility, may ever come to separate the superior and inferior provinces of the architect's present dominion, I should not like to predict, although assuredly the separation of the architect from the civil engineer on one hand, and from the measuring surveyor on another, is already sufficiently complete to warrant us to look for another separation such as this if it were advisable. Whether it may become advisable, time will duly show; but at the present day no one ought to recommend the learner to entertain any idea which would lead him to the abandonment of practical building as a subject of his study. It is, indeed, rather necessary to urge upon him the cultivation of this subject as matters stand; for at present, the supervision of building still holds chief importance in the architect's every-day province, even if it were not absolutely necessary that his knowledge of this should be comparatively intimate as a basis for either science or art, while it is too much to be feared that many of our youth are permitted to evade a question which they are inclined to deem unpalatable and *infra dignitate*, to such an extent as to deprive them in the commencement of active life of one of the best means of recommending higher attainments, establishing a reputation, and earning bread. It is a dingy and a greasy lamp, it may be, but it serves to connect its brighter companions with the vulgar light of the common world.

You will meet with many who do not hesitate to insist that no man can pretend to be an architect who has not actually worked at the bench. I have always been free from the assaults of such persons, my son, inasmuch as I was caused in my early days to rise early for perhaps a fortnight, and do duty before office hours as a student of joinery, during which period I nearly accomplished the manufacture of some such matter as a mousetrap, and wrecked a jack-plane on a nail. But although those who contend for this position are generally that species of practitioners who are themselves *au fait* at bench-work, but at nothing more, and who are not, therefore, the best judges of the more advanced question; yet there is another shape in which the matter may be put with a force which cannot be overrated,—every young architect ought unquestionably to spend a portion of his time of study in the capacity of a clerk of works. Nothing more primitive than this is really demanded,—for the architect, even in his wild state, has only to "conduct the work and direct the secondary artificers,"—but nothing less than a practical engagement in the duties of a clerk of works can serve the purpose of him who would start fair in life. No extent of reference to precedents and books can keep him right in his early specifications, no amount of tact can cover his manifest weakness when in contact with the workman, and no amount of mere theory can furnish him with that indispensable readiness and knowledge of routine which practice alone can give.

The extent to which the architect must be acquainted with building is a question of some importance, even if it were one of greater difficulty. He must "conduct the work" in so far as to understand any point wherein the builder may have an option to offer him, and